

## SECTION I

### PART L STATEWIDE TRANSFER POLICY

#### **1.00 Introduction**

The Statewide Transfer Policy pertains to the transfer of course credits from one Colorado public higher education institution to another as well as intra-institutional transfer. The policy applies to all Colorado public higher education undergraduate programs, focusing on student movement from two-year to four-year institutions, four-year to four-year institutions, four-year to two-year institutions, or within four-year institution.

This policy does not address transfer issues where the state has limited legal authority: the transfer of credits from private, non-accredited, or out-of-state institutions, or the awarding of credit for non-credit bearing courses.

The policy is divided into the following sections:

- 1.00 Introduction
- 2.00 Statutory Authority
- 3.00 Policy Goals
- 4.00 Roles and Responsibilities
- 5.00 Transfer Options
- 6.00 General Education Procedures
- 7.00 Articulation Agreements Procedures
- 8.00 Transfer Agreements Procedures
- Glossary
- Articulation Agreement Format

#### **2.00 Statutory Authority**

The transfer policy is based on statutory authority of Colorado Revised Statute 23-1-108 (7) (a), C.R.S. 23-1-108.5, and C.R.S. 23-1-125.

#### **3.00 Policy Goals**

The policy goal is to ensure access to undergraduate degree programs, and facilitate completion of degree requirements, including:

- 3.01 The General Assembly implemented the Student Bill of Rights (C.R.S. 23-1-125) to assure that students enrolled in public institutions of higher education have the following rights:

- (a) A quality general education experience that develops competencies in reading, writing, mathematics, technology and critical thinking through an integrated arts and science experience.
- (b) Students should be able to complete their associate of arts and associate of science degree programs in no more than sixty credit hours or their baccalaureate programs in no more than one hundred twenty credit hours unless there are additional degree requirements recognized by the commission;
- (c) A student can sign a two-year or four-year graduation agreement that formalizes a plan for that student to obtain a degree in two or four years, unless there are additional degree requirements recognized by the commission;
- (d) Students have a right to clear and concise information concerning which courses must be completed successfully to complete their degrees;
- (e) Students have a right to know which courses are transferable among the state public two-year and four-year institutions of higher education;
- (f) Students, upon successful completion of core general education courses should have those courses satisfy the core course requirements of all Colorado public institutions of higher education;
- (g) Students have a right to know if courses from one or more public higher education institutions satisfy the students' graduation requirements;
- (h) A student's credit for the completion of the core requirements and core courses shall not expire for ten years from the date of initial enrollment and shall be transferable.

## **4.00 Roles and Responsibilities**

### **4.01 Commission**

The role of the Colorado Commission on Higher Education is to facilitate a simple statewide transfer process, including:

- 4.01.01 Ensuring that state-supported two-year and four-year institutions provide native and transfer students equitable treatment in assisting them to meet their educational goals.
- 4.01.02 Establishing, in consultation with the governing boards, a statewide transfer policy to assure that students can transfer qualified college-level courses between and among institutions.
- 4.01.03 Designating the approved list of state guaranteed general education courses.
- 4.01.04 Resolving student appeals regarding state guaranteed transfer courses or referring cases to the governing board for action.
- 4.01.05 Resolving inter-institutional impasses or problems pertaining to transfer negotiations.

#### 4.02 Governing Boards

The governing board shall ensure that its institution complies with statewide policies and statutory requirements that pertain to transfer, including admission, degree approval, and student appeals

#### 4.03 Institutions

The institution's role is to administer an efficient and orderly transfer process. The responsibilities are effective when this policy is adopted unless specified otherwise, including:

- 4.03.01 Publishing the Student Bill of Rights in course catalogs, web sites, and advising centers as listed in this policy.
- 4.03.02 Honoring the transferability of state guaranteed general education course credits (Fall 2003).
- 4.03.03 Aligning existing transfer agreements for all approved baccalaureate degree programs with current statute and policy by June 30, 2003.
- 4.03.04 Publishing in printed and electronic form the general education courses that are designated as the state guaranteed general education course designation (Spring 2003).
- 4.03.05 Evaluating student transcripts within 30 days of receiving a complete set of transcripts. It is recommended that this happen within two weeks whenever possible.
- 4.03.06 Developing effective transfer advising systems, including training faculty and student advisors.
- 4.03.07 Establishing an aggressive student advising process to provide freshman students with planning information and transfer students with appeals information.
- 4.03.08 Developing advising partnerships among all four-year and two-year public institutions to jointly advise students.
- 4.03.09 Developing guaranteed two-year and four-year graduation agreements.
- 4.03.10 Implementing an appeal process that addresses student transfer appeals within 30 days of the date the student files an appeal.

#### 4.04 Students

Students are responsible to act in their best academic interests and seek the information necessary for making informed choices, including:

- 4.04.01 Selecting courses from the state guaranteed general education list of courses if planning to transfer.
- 4.04.02 Contacting an advisor to understand the terms and benefits of the transfer agreements.
- 4.04.03 Filing an appeal in a timely manner to resolve transfer problems.
- 4.04.04 Understanding the limits in applying general education transfer credits within general education categories.

#### 4.05 GE-25 Council

The General Education Council (GE 25 Council) is responsible for recommending the criteria and framework for "statewide guaranteed general education courses," identifying general education assessments, and communicating the state criteria to the members' respective institutions.

### 5.00 Transfer Options

Sections 5.01 and 5.02 describe two options for students seeking to transfer among Colorado's public institutions of higher education: those students who transfer to four-year institutions after completing an associate of arts or associate of science degree from a two-year institution, and those students who transfer statewide guaranteed general education courses among any Colorado public colleges or universities.

To be effective, these transfer options require certain responsibilities on the part of both institutions of higher education and students. For their part, two-year and four-year colleges and universities need to continue to advise students to help them know which courses are most appropriate for their intended major programs of study. And for their part, students need to consult with their college advisors to make informed course decisions when planning to transfer to another institution. Informed decision-making is the best strategy for successfully transferring among institutions and ensuring this policy's effectiveness.

#### 5.01 Transfer of Associate of Arts and Associate of Science Degrees

Colorado public four-year higher education institutions will honor the transfer of an Associate of Arts (A.A.) degree and the Associate of Science (A.S.) degree earned at a Colorado public institution that offer A.A. or A.S. degrees. A student who earns an A.A. or A.S. degree at a Colorado public college, including completing the state guaranteed general education courses with a grade of C or better in all courses will transfer, upon admission, with junior standing into any arts and science degree program offered by a Colorado public four-year college. The credits earned in the associate degree program will apply at minimum to 35 credit hours of lower division general education and 25 credit hours of additional graduation credits. Since 1988 Colorado has had an operating two-plus-two transfer agreement that ensures a student who completes an A.A. or A.S. degree with a grade of "C" or better in all courses, will have junior standing at the receiving institution i.e., transfer 60 credit hours. Because all liberal arts and sciences degrees are designed to be completed in 120 credit hours, a transfer student can complete a four-year degree in the same time as a native student, 120 hours. The receiving institution will evaluate credit for prior learning, Advanced Placement, and correspondence courses following its standard policy.

## 5.02 Transfer of General Education

Colorado's state guaranteed general education courses are designed to allow students to begin their general education courses at one Colorado public higher education institution and later transfer to another without loss of general education credits. That is, state guaranteed general education courses may be applied to the general education graduation requirement program or the graduation requirements of the declared major, whichever is in the student's best interest. Effective fall 2003, Colorado policy ensures that students who successfully complete a state guaranteed general education course will receive transfer credits applied to graduation requirements in all majors at all public institutions unless a specific statewide articulation agreement exists. As indicated in Section I-L-5.04 of this policy, certain majors may prescribe specific courses in the major or prerequisite courses that must be completed as part of the Associate of Arts or Associate of Sciences degree for admission into the degree program. Students should consult the transfer guides for each CCHE-approved baccalaureate degree program for information regarding specific major or prerequisite course requirements.

The state's guaranteed general education curriculum is organized into five categories: communication, mathematics, fine arts and humanities, social and behavioral sciences, and physical and life sciences. To complete the Colorado state guaranteed general education core, students are required to take 11 courses or 35 to 37 semester credit hours and earn a C grade or better in each course. The guarantee is limited to the number of semester credit hours in each general education category.

Sem. Cr. Hr.	General Education Categories
6	<b>Communication:</b> 1 Intro. Writing course (3 semester credits) <b>Communication:</b> 1 Intermediate Composition (3 semester credits)
3-5	<b>Mathematics:</b> 1 course (3 to 5 semester credits)
9	<b>Arts and Humanities:</b> Fine Arts and Expression Humanities Ways of Thinking <i>Select 3 courses with no more than 2 courses from any 1 category</i>
9	<b>Social and Behavioral Sciences</b> History Economic and Political Systems Geography Human Behavior and Social Systems <i>Select 3 courses, 1 of which must be history, with no more than 2 courses from any 1 category</i>
8	<b>Physical and Life Sciences:</b> Select 2 laboratory courses

All state guaranteed general education courses in communication, mathematics, arts and humanities, social and behavior science, and physical and life science shall be identified by a state-assigned common number.

When evaluating a transfer student's transcript, each Colorado public higher education institution will apply state guaranteed general education credits to its general education graduation requirements. Institutions may require additional general education graduation requirements beyond the 35 semester credit hours of state guaranteed general education credits. If an institution requires less than 35 general education credits, the institution will accept in transfer the full 35 credits and apply these credits toward a student's graduation requirements.

#### 5.03 Statewide Articulation Agreements

An Articulation Agreement is a statewide agreement among all Colorado community colleges and all four-year public institutions offering a particular degree program. It is most commonly used for undergraduate professional programs that have specific course requirements established by accrediting or external licensure boards<sup>1</sup>.

#### 5.04 Transfer Guides

Each institution is responsible for implementing a Transfer Guide for each CCHE-approved baccalaureate degree program unless a statewide articulation agreement is in place. The Transfer Guide shall be designed so that a student can complete a baccalaureate program in no more than 120 credit hours unless there are additional graduation requirements recognized by the Commission. The transfer guide defines the 25 credit hours required beyond the state guaranteed general education credits and may include required courses in the major or prerequisite courses for admission into the degree program. The transfer guides are to be on file with CCHE.

### 6.00 General Education Procedures and Processes

Institutions may nominate a course that is an institutionally approved general education course for consideration as a state guaranteed general education course. To nominate a course, the institution must submit a signed nomination form and supporting material.

CCHE will consider nominations each fall. Using a faculty review process, working committees will evaluate nominated courses against the adopted statewide content and competency criteria. CCHE will forward the recommended courses to the Commission for action.

CCHE will assign a common number to approved state guaranteed general education courses. Institutions will list the state guaranteed course number in all printed catalog materials, including on-line catalogs.

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<sup>1</sup> Currently Colorado has several approved statewide articulation agreements --Business, Nursing, Engineering, and Teacher Education.

Courses that receive the state guarantee continue to carry that designation unless the institution chooses to withdraw the course from general education, the course is not offered within a two-year period, or evaluations indicate that a course is not meeting the state criteria.

#### **7.00 Articulation Agreement Procedure**

To develop an articulation agreement, CCHE or a sponsoring governing board will convene a committee that includes representatives from each public institution offering the degree program for purposes of negotiating the terms of the articulation agreement including course equivalencies. Each academic vice-president will sign the agreement, and publish the approved agreement so that students, faculty, and academic advisors are fully informed of the terms of the agreement. The articulation agreement format is included as Appendix B.

Transfer appeals filed by students transferring in these fields of study will be decided by the terms and conditions specified in the Statewide Articulation Agreements. Individual transfer guides in these fields of study will not supplant the existing statewide agreements.

#### **8.00 Transfer Guides Procedures**

Transfer guides are institutional-specific agreements, which contain information about graduation requirements for a particular CCHE-approved degree program, including course equivalency and program admission requirements and prerequisites. Once negotiated, an institution or governing board transmits the guide to CCHE and publishes the approved agreement so that students, faculty and academic advisors are fully informed of the terms of the agreement.

Transfer appeals filed by students transferring in these fields of study will be decided by terms and conditions specified in the Transfer Agreement.

## **GLOSSARY      Definition of Terms**

Articulation Agreements: Articulation agreements apply to specific degree programs as unilateral agreements that specify the common terms, conditions and expectations for students transferring into the degree program. When these courses and/or degree programs are completed successfully at the sending institution, they will, for admitted students, be accepted in transfer and apply to graduation requirements for a specified degree program at all receiving institutions.

GE 25 Council: A council of 25 educational leaders representing each higher education governing board, including presidents, academic vice-presidents, faculty, and students.

General Education: General Education requirements represent an institutional statement about the general body of knowledge and skills that the recipient of any undergraduate degree conferred by an institution should possess.

Institution: A Colorado public higher education institution.

Institutional Dispute: A disagreement between institutions regarding an interpretation of the Statewide Transfer Policy or a disagreement regarding compliance with the procedures and guidelines of this policy, including failure to reach agreement on a Transfer Agreement.

Inter-Institutional Transfer: A student who transfers credit from one Colorado public higher education institution to another Colorado public higher education institution.

Intra-Institutional Transfer: A change of major. A student changes his/her stated major or degree objectives at the institution where the student is currently enrolled.

Native Student: A student who begins and completes an undergraduate degree program at a single institution.

State Guaranteed General Education Course: Courses that the Commission has approved as meeting the state criteria, including satisfying the content criteria in communication, mathematics, social science, arts and humanities or natural and physical science and competency criteria in communication, reading, mathematics, technology, and critical thinking.

Student Transfer Appeal: A student's claim that a principle defined in the statewide transfer policy or a section of an institutional transfer agreement or articulation agreement has been violated. The Commission serves as the final court of appeal and all its decisions are binding.

Successful Completion: Successful completion means that the student passed all 35 state guaranteed general education credit hours with the requisite grade of "C" or better.



Transfer Guide: The written agreement reached between two or more specific institutions for a specific degree program about course equivalency, and program admission criteria.

Transfer Plan: A transfer plan is the specific plan developed by an advisor for a student with a specific transfer objective (e.g., Transfer into a Computer Science degree program at a specific institution.). An advisor at the sending or receiving institution may develop the plan based on an existing transfer agreement and may not include exemptions to a published transfer agreement.

Transfer Student: A transfer student is a student who begins a degree program at one institution and transfers to another institution.

Transcript Evaluation: The process by which an institution evaluates credits attempted and earned at a different institution, applies accepted credits to graduation requirements, and informs a transfer student of what degree and course requirements remain to be fulfilled.